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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY BURNS' MAY 13 DISCUSSIONS IN ROME

REF: A. ROME 1529

1B. ROME 1507

Classified By: DCM Emil Skodon for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Burns exchanged views with senior Italian Foreign Ministry officials on UN Security Council reform, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Syria/Lebanon, Darfur, and Iran during his May 13 stopover in Rome. On most issues, Italian positions were generally in tune with United States views, with the glaring exception of Syria, from which senior MFA officials had just returned. The Italians opened the meeting with their most pressing concern, UNSC reform. Surprisingly, however, Iraq was not on their agenda, although it was the major focus of the press roundtable that U/S Burns hosted later in the day. End summary.

12. (SBU) U/S Burns' May 13 discussions with senior MFA officials focused on UN Reform, Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Syria, Darfur, and Iran. MFA Political Director Giulio Terzi hosted the discussions, accompanied by his deputy, Claudio Bisogniero; DG for Europe Giovanni Caracciolo; DG for European Integration, Ferdinando Nelli Feroci; Director for EU and CFSP Luigi Mattioli; Vice DG for the Mediterranean Luca Del Balzo; Vice DG for Asia Alessandro Cevese; and G-8 Office Director Giampaolo Cantini. The U.S. delegation also included Ambassador Sembler, Pol M/C, visiting EUR/WE Office Director Allegrone, Pol-Mil Counselor, P Special Assistant, and PolOff (notetaker).

UN Reform

13. (C) Terzi opened the meeting with UN Security Council reform, calling the issue a concern of importance to Italian foreign policy and European policy and integration. Terzi said Italian officials had discussed the G-4 framework resolution and the United for Consensus movement with Kofi Annan's facilitators two days earlier in New York. He said Italy understands the US position on Japan, but warned that any additional enlargement of the Security Council would be very negative in terms of both effectiveness and political balance. Italy is concerned by recent declarations by members of the G-4 community (the German and Indian PermReps) calling for an enlargement of the P-5 to P-11 as a means of diluting or counterbalancing the P-5 structure.

14. (C) U/S Burns assured Terzi that there is great recognition, from President Bush on down, on the US' responsibility to the UN. The purpose of reform should be to strengthen the UN, and the US supports many of Kofi Annan's proposals, such as rebuilding the UN's peacekeeping capacity, abolishing the Committee on Human Rights as currently structured in Geneva, and financial reforms. Regarding UNSC reform, he emphasized that the US standard is effectiveness. While the US has decided to support Japan and hopes that a decision on Japan will be taken before September, we have not taken any decisions on whether to support other candidates. However, the US is listening closely and will consult with Italy, one of our closest allies on the continent, prior to announcing any decision. He said the US will decide on the G-4 proposal to set the stage before it gathers too much steam. Eliminating the UNSC veto is a non-starter for the US, he said, and the President will decide the US position on this important issue.

15. (C) U/S Burns also stressed the need to support development, noting that, because NGOs and corporations contribute as much as the USG, the US does not get credit for all that Americans do. USG aid to Africa has quadrupled, and US aid worldwide has doubled, but on paper the US still does not make the 0.7 percent target because other types of aid are not included. A better measurement would be to incorporate what each country's public and private sectors

do.

Balkans

16. (C) Turning to the Balkans, Terzi, citing the Quint's discussion the previous day, said we must stick to the schedule in Kosovo. Carracciolo continued saying that Italy has been very active, especially since DAS Stephens' visit

(Ref A), and is fine-tuning its position with other Contact Group members. It is important to keep Belgrade in the process, he said, a view that increasingly is shared by the US and the Contact Group. Handing U/S Burns a copy of an Italian proposal on the way forward (faxed to EUR/SCE), Carracciolo said that we need a "Road Map" for Kosovo, including more substantial demarches on issues like institutions (like those created for Bosnia in the Bonn Powers), military involvement (i.e., role of NATO), and the economy, where he cited budget autonomy as a possible first concession to Kosovar authorities in term of sovereignty. Italy is very sensitive to decentralization, noting the need to guarantee the security of the Kosovo-Serb minority.

17. (C) On Bosnia, Terzi said it is up to the Bosnian Serbs to show flexibility now. Europe's strategy is to transfer the successful Central European model to the former Yugoslav republics by offering the prospects of EU accession. So far, the results are not completely satisfactory, but it is still the right approach. Again, a Road Map with conditions and concrete incentives such as the Stabilization and Association Agreements or the prospect of accession would be a useful tool. There are two elements of uncertainty to this approach, however: 1) enlargement fatigue (evident in the upcoming French referendum on the EU constitution); and 2) the performance of the countries in the region themselves. Carracciolo added that the prospect of Partnership for Peace cooperation was also an important incentive.

18. (C) U/S Burns noted that the Contact Group would meet again in June, on the margins of the G-8 Summit and that he would be testifying soon before Congress on the Balkans and traveling to the region in early June to present a renewed articulation of US policy. He said the US believes a senior European political figure should lead the final status talks. Agreeing with the need to stick to the schedule, U/S Burns noted that KFOR has been strengthened since 2004, most caveats have been lifted, and Gen. Jones wants to transform the mission into task force configurations. U/S Burns asked the Italians to be flexible and listen to Gen. Jones, with a focus on effectiveness.

19. (C) Turning briefly to PIFWCs, U/S Burns said Serbia and Croatia could entertain no hope of membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace until they cooperated on this front, although Serbia had turned in some important alleged war criminals and may be considering turning over Mladic. Burns urged Italy to help keep pressure on the Serbs until Mladic and Karadzic are turned over.

Afghanistan

10. (C) Terzi stressed Italy's commitment in Afghanistan, noting that the Italians took command of the Herat Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) on March 31. (Terzi gave U/S Burns a copy of the presentation on the Herat PRT recently given at NATO by Italian officials.) Italy is leading the justice reform efforts, where it is important to empower the Afghan government, he said, but emphasized that the links between issues like security and narcotics-trafficking make it necessary to look at the reform package as a whole. Referencing the June 20-21 donor conference in London, Terzi asked how we can promote better coordination and asked for US support for better links between security, drug, and judicial issues.

11. (C) U/S Burns thanked Italy for its work in Herat and said the US would look at the suggested G-8 language. As of this summer, NATO will be in north, south, and west Afghanistan. The planned OEF-ISAF intergration, he said, makes it necessary to link various sectors, and this will be a good topic for G-8 discussions. When the merger does occur, it will be necessary to eliminate as many caveats as possible, and it might be useful to distinguish between combat and peacekeeping forces.

Syria/Lebanon

12. (C) Deputy DG for the Middle East Luca Del Balzo opened his remarks by summarizing the recent trip to Lebanon and Syria (in which he took part) of Italian U/S for the Middle East and Africa Alfredo Mantica. Del Balzo said the purpose of the trip was twofold: 1) to make a first-hand assessment, by meeting with all of the government and opposition parties, of the situation in Lebanon in the run-up to elections, and 2) to send a loud and clear message to the Syrians on the expectations of the international community, including the need for free, democratic elections in Lebanon without any foreign intervention. Del Balzo said the message was well-received in Damascus. Noting that the EU intends to monitor the Lebanese elections, he commented that without a change in the electoral law, there would not be much change in the Parliament's make-up. Indeed, he said, 90 - 100 MPs out of a total of approximately 128 total could already be

predicted. Del Balzo also said that he asked the Syrians to use the upcoming Baath party Congress to send a clear signal on reforms, such as free market and democratic reforms, that would help Syria move towards signing an Association Agreement with the EU.

¶13. (C) U/S Burns responded in very clear terms that this is not the time to be meeting with the Syrians or signing an Association Agreement; the US agrees with the UNSYG and Special Representative Roed-Larsen that this is not the time to go back to "business as usual." Rather, we need to keep isolating the Syrian regime to pressure it to make the changes required under UNSCR 1559. In Iraq, Syria continues to play a harmful role by not shutting major crossing points that support travel of insurgents and by assisting Former Regime Elements (FREs). The US wants to keep isolating the Syrian government. Washington has no plans to return our Ambassador to Damascus and Rome should reconsider meeting with Syrian officials. In particular, he urged the Italians not to receive FM Shara'a in Rome.

¶14. (C) On Lebanon, U/S Burns praised UNSYG Roed-Larsen's excellent work and the major achievement of getting most of the Syrians out. Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans and that we believe will never voluntarily change its stripes or disarm, remains a challenge, but U/S Burns said that the Lebanese will have to decide how to deal with it.

¶15. (C) Del Balzo reiterated the MFA's well-known position that, because of Italy's historic and close relationships with both Lebanon and Syria, the US should use Italy to pass the right authoritative messages to Damascus. U/S Burns countered that the Syrians misread such messages, even when they come from the US, citing a previous "tough message" visit by Secretary Powell that Damascus interpreted as a sign that everything was fine. On the contrary, Syrian military intelligence is still in Lebanon and Roed-Larsen has told the US he will not certify Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon as required under UNSCR 1559. The US, U/S Burns repeated, is in sync with the UN on this issue.

¶16. (S) Following the MFA meeting, at a lunch hosted by PM Berlusconi's Diplomatic Advisor (and Italian Ambassador-Designate to Washington) Giovanni Castellaneta,

the Ambassador raised the issue of Italy's proposed sale of an Air Defense Integrated System (ADIS) to Syria (Ref B) with both Castellaneta and Finmeccanica CEO Pier Francesco Guarugaglini, who was also present. Guarugaglini stated unequivocally that Finmeccanica will not pursue the sale.

Darfur

¶17. (C) On Darfur, U/S Burns told the Italian officials that the African Union (AU) chairman has asked the US for NATO's help in providing command, planning, and lift support. Kofi Annan has called Secretary Rice three times with similar requests. The French, however, are blocking a NATO role and lobbying Francophone countries to this end, based on the "theological argument" that NATO troops should not get involved in former colonies. Arguing that both the EU and NATO can play useful roles, U/S Burns said that the assistance the AU is requesting is what NATO does best, whereas the EU has a comparative advantage in areas like civilian policing capabilities, and that it is ridiculous to allow thousands of people to starve because of a theological debate over NATO's role. U/S Burns asked Italy to help encourage the French to stop blocking this effort. (Note. The MFA's Deputy NATO Office later called PolOff to report that, following the meeting, Italy's PermRep to NATO discussed the issue with his French counterpart in Brussels, and that things are now "on the right path." End note.)

Iran/IAEA

¶18. (C) Lack of time precluded a full discussion of Iran, but U/S Burns told his interlocutors that the US fully supports the EU-3 effort. He warned, however, that if Iran resumes uranium conversion at Isfahan, the issue must be brought before the IAEA for referral to the UNSC. Terzi responded that Italy recently demarched Iran at the NPT RevCon in New York on Iran's recent statement that it would resume processing, and expressed Rome's serious concern.

¶19. (U) U/S Burns has cleared this cable.

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